



HEARD ACROSS MONTANA

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Public Safety Radio Site Build-out RPF Released

By E. Wing Spooner espooner@mt.gov

The IM Project has released a Request for Proposal (RFP) for a company with construction, engineering, project management and product integration resources for the build out of self-supporting communications towers and associated material, equipment and services. These include communications shelters, generators, propane tanks, fencing and geotechnical engineering and soil analysis. The successful bidder assumes responsibility as the Prime Contractor and is responsible for constructing required facilities for three construction seasons. Responses to the RFP are needed by 2:00 pm on Aug. 1, 2008. For more information, visit: <http://gsd.mt.gov/osbs/default.asp> under "Construction."

IM Technical Committee Meeting

By E. Wing Spooner espooner@mt.gov

The Interoperability Montana Technical Committee (IMTC) met in Helena on Mon., June 23 and listened to a presentation by Raytheon JPS representatives Bob LaRose and Kent Reeves about the technical features of the Raytheon JPS P25 Channel Controller.

IMTC Chair Bob McWilliams reported on activities of the IMTC Administrative Sub-Committee, which approved several Site Overview Documents (SODs) for the purpose of filing for NEPAs. Chris Christensen, PSSB, provided background information about the site and bandwidth agreement with BNSF Railway. A motion was passed to provide generator back-up power for local equipment at three Lincoln County sites.

Scott Bradford, PSSB, reported that the Frequency Sub-Committee has finalized frequencies for the Cominco site, so the combiner has been ordered. Roger Smith, Montana Highway Patrol and Network Design Sub-Committee Chair announced that the Lewis and Clark ring upgrade is complete. Harris-Stratex is installing dishes and establishing microwave paths at multiple sites. A microwave engineering study for the Southwest Loop is scheduled within a month. Work also is being completed in Gallatin County. Even though access to sites has been difficult the last month due to snow and mud conditions, huge progress has been made.

Pete Mohan, PSSB, worked with members to review changes to the Site Development Process document that were necessary because the IM Project now has sub-grantee status. Jack Spillman provided the Northern Tier consortium report and indicated that the scope of work for the Blacktail and Big Mountain sites needs to be revised because costs came in too high. Dorothy Gremaux, Central Consortium representative, updated the group on progress with U.S. Air Force contracts. Bob McWilliams informed the group that the finance committee adopted recommendations for distributing subscriber units with

COPS grant funding. The IMPD will review and vote on them on July 15. IMTC members were invited to attend a FATPOT Demonstration on AVL Mapping and Location Technology with Smartzone Trunking taking place at the Helena Law Enforcement Center.

The next IMTC meeting will be Monday, July 28 at the State Capitol in Helena starting at 9:00 am.

Eastern Tier Consortium Meeting

By Scott Bradford sbradford@mt.gov

The Eastern Tier Interoperability Consortium (ETIC) held its monthly meeting in Glendive on June 23 at the County Courthouse. Because a quorum was not available, no business actions were taken. Attendees focused much of their discussion around concerns by several counties that needs in the Eastern Tier were not being met and the perception that money from the IM Project was being diverted elsewhere.

Chief Michaels provided an overview of the project and described impacts to the ETIC, both past and projected ones over the next couple of years. He stressed the importance of local elected officials submitting letters of support for the upcoming appropriation request, which is anticipated to benefit the Eastern Tier.

Scott Bradford, PSSB, provided a brief summary of Dept. of Homeland Security FY08 funding recommendations and outlined Eastern Tier sites that are currently included in the IM budget. Discussion led by Carter County representative Sheriff Rusty Jardee suggested compiling maintenance concerns and proposing equitable sustainability ideas to the IM Governance Committee for consideration. PSSB will collect and organize this information for ETIC to submit as a proposal to the Governance Committee.

The ETIC will not meet in July. The next scheduled meeting is Wed. August 20 in Glendive.

Big Sky 11 Consortium Meeting

By Scott Bradford sbradford@mt.gov

The June Big Sky 11 Consortia meeting was held in Columbus on Thurs., June 26. Its meetings are being held around the region to encourage responders and elected officials to become involved in consortium business and become more educated about the Interoperability Montana (IM) Project. Project Director Ed Auken provided a review of the latest IM Project Directors meeting and what expected actions might impact potential Big Sky 11 sites. Several consortia members provided updates on key sites that affect their regions. Ed encouraged all members to push forward getting lease agreements and returning signed letters for the congressional delegations in support of the IM federal funding request.

Scott Bradford, PSSB, provided a summary of DHS



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2008 funding recommendations and reviewed approved and budgeted Public Safety Interoperable Communications (PSIC) Investment Justification #1 projects. Between the two funding sources, approximately six sites in the consortium will receive infrastructure upgrades with the addition of up to eight microwave hops. In addition, upcoming grants may provide the ability to expand microwave, trunking and mobile data infrastructure as well as responder subscriber units.

All members agreed with the importance of identifying the City of Billings' participation in the consortium and IM process. Acorn Technologies, a Johnson vendor in Billings, reported that the City extended its service contract for its 800 MHz system to provide continuity following recent re-banding negotiations. This extension will allow the city to explore options for cooperation with the IM Project. The consortium, Yellowstone County and PSSB pledged to assist the City in any way possible by providing additional information, facilitating meetings and/or assisting with grant submissions as necessary.

Big Sky 11 will not meet in July. The next scheduled meeting will be Tues., Aug. 26, in Roundup at ambulance headquarters.

Interoperable Emergency Communications Grant Program Announced

By E. Wing Spooner espooner@mt.gov

The DHS Office of Emergency Communications announced a new grant this week entitled the "Interoperable Emergency Communication Grant Program (IECGP)". Nearly \$50 million will be provided to 56 states and territories to improve local, tribal, regional, statewide and national communications involved in response to natural disasters, acts of terrorism and other man-made disasters. The grants also will assist states, territories, local units of government and tribal communities to implement their Statewide Communications interoperability Plans (SCIP).

Funding is available for planning, training, exercise, and personnel. Montana's allocation is \$242,875. This year, the grant does not cover equipment acquisition. The application deadline for State Administrative Agencies (SAA) to apply is July 21, 2008. For more information, visit:

<http://www.fema.gov/government/grant/iecgp/index.shtm>.

IM Project Seeks Executive Director

By E. Wing Spooner espooner@mt.gov

The Interoperability Montana Project Directors (IMPD) approved hiring an Executive Director to manage the IM Project. A position description is available at <http://interop.mt.gov/>.

The position also is posted at the Montana jobs site: <https://jobs.mt.gov/jobs/seeker/search/search.seek>. Type in job order number 2973341 in the search box.

Upcoming Meetings

July 3

Northern Tier (NTIP) • Conference Call

July 9 – Meeting Cancelled

Central Montana Consortium (CMICC)

Great Falls • Next mtg: Aug. 13, Lewistown

July 14 (Please Note Date Change)

IMGC Finance Committee

Helena • 9:00 am - Noon

Anderson & ZurMuehlen • 828 Great Northern Blvd.

July 14 (Please Note: Date Change)

IM Governance Committee

Helena • Noon - 5:00 pm

DOC Annex Conf. Rm.; Behind 515 N. Sanders St.

July 15 (Please Note: Date Change)

IM Project Directors (IMPD) Meeting

Helena • 9:00 am - 3:00 pm • State Capitol

July 16

South Central Montana Consortium (SCMIC)

Bozeman • 10:00 am

Emergency Operations Center, 219 East Tamarack

July 17

I-15/90 Corridor Consortium

Butte • 10:00 am • Chamber of Commerce

1000 George St.

July 21

Tri-County Consortium

Helena • 10:00 am

DOC Annex Conf. Rm.; Behind 515 N. Sanders St.

July 22

Western Interoperability Comm. Consortium (WICC)

Thompson Falls • 10:00 am • Sanders County

Location to be announced

July 28

IM Technical Committee (IMTC) Meeting

Helena • 9:00 am • State Capitol • Room 172



Happy Independence Day !

Please Note: Due to the July 4th national holiday, the *Heard Across Montana* newsletter will not be published next Friday. You will receive your next issue on July 11. Have a great holiday!